

§ 1.166-4

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described in paragraph (a)(3)(i) of this section.

(iv) *Effective date.* This paragraph (a)(3) applies to significant modifications of debt instruments occurring on or after September 23, 1996.

(b) *Total worthlessness.* If a debt becomes wholly worthless during the taxable year, the amount thereof which has not been allowed as a deduction from gross income for any prior taxable year shall be allowed as a deduction for the current taxable year.

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11402, Nov. 29, 1960, as amended by T.D. 8763, 63 FR 4396, Jan. 29, 1998]

§ 1.166-4 Reserve for bad debts.

(a) *Allowance of deduction.* A taxpayer who has established the reserve method of treating bad debts and has maintained proper reserve accounts for bad debts or who, in accordance with paragraph (b) of § 1.166-1, adopts the reserve method of treating bad debts may deduct from gross income a reasonable addition to a reserve for bad debts in lieu of deducting specific bad debt items. This paragraph applies both to bad debts owed to the taxpayer and to bad debts arising out of section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations. If a reserve is maintained for bad debts arising out of section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations, then a separate reserve must also be maintained for all other debt obligations of the taxpayer in the same trade or business, if any. A taxpayer may not maintain a reserve for bad debts arising out of section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations if with respect to direct debt obligations in the same trade or business the taxpayer takes deductions when the debts become worthless in whole or in part rather than maintaining a reserve for such obligations. See § 1.166-10 for rules concerning section 166(f)(1)(A) guaranteed debt obligations.

(b) *Reasonableness of addition to reserve—*(1) *Relevant factors.* What constitutes a reasonable addition to a reserve for bad debts shall be determined in the light of the facts existing at the close of the taxable year of the proposed addition. The reasonableness of the addition will vary as between classes of business and with conditions of

business prosperity. It will depend primarily upon the total amount of debts outstanding as of the close of the taxable year, including those arising currently as well as those arising in prior taxable years, and the total amount of the existing reserve.

(2) *Correction of errors in prior estimates.* In the event that subsequent realizations upon outstanding debts prove to be more or less than estimated at the time of the creation of the existing reserve, the amount of the excess or inadequacy in the existing reserve shall be reflected in the determination of the reasonable addition necessary in the current taxable year.

(c) *Statement required.* A taxpayer using the reserve method shall file with his return a statement showing—

(1) The volume of his charge sales or other business transactions for the taxable year and the percentage of the reserve to such amount;

(2) The total amount of notes and accounts receivable at the beginning and close of the taxable year;

(3) The amount of the debts which have become wholly or partially worthless and have been charged against the reserve account; and

(4) The computation of the addition to the reserve for bad debts.

(d) *Special rules applicable to financial institutions.* (1) For special rules for the addition to the bad debt reserves of certain banks, see §§ 1.585-1 through 1.585-3.

(2) For special rules for the addition to the bad debt reserves of small business investment companies and business development corporations, see §§ 1.586-1 and 1.586-2.

(3) For special rules for the addition to the bad debts reserves of certain mutual savings banks, domestic building and loan associations, and cooperative banks, see §§ 1.593-1 through 1.593-11.

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11402, Nov. 26, 1960, as amended by T.D. 6728, 29 FR 5855, May 5, 1964; T.D. 7444, 41 FR 53481, Dec. 7, 1976; T.D. 8071, 51 FR 2479, Jan. 17, 1986]

§ 1.166-5 Nonbusiness debts.

(a) *Allowance of deduction as capital loss.* (1) The loss resulting from any nonbusiness debt's becoming partially or wholly worthless within the taxable

year shall not be allowed as a deduction under either section 166(a) or section 166(c) in determining the taxable income of a taxpayer other than a corporation. See section 166(d)(1)(A).

(2) If, in the case of a taxpayer other than a corporation, a nonbusiness debt becomes wholly worthless within the taxable year, the loss resulting therefrom shall be treated as a loss from the sale or exchange, during the taxable year, of a capital asset held for not more than 1 year (6 months for taxable years beginning before 1977; 9 months for taxable years beginning in 1977). Such a loss is subject to the limitations provided in section 1211, relating to the limitation on capital losses, and section 1212, relating to the capital loss carryover, and in the regulations under those sections. A loss on a nonbusiness debt shall be treated as sustained only if and when the debt has become totally worthless, and no deduction shall be allowed for a nonbusiness debt which is recoverable in part during the taxable year.

(b) *Nonbusiness debt defined.* For purposes of section 166 and this section, a nonbusiness debt is any debt other than—

(1) A debt which is created, or acquired, in the course of a trade or business of the taxpayer, determined without regard to the relationship of the debt to a trade or business of the taxpayer at the time when the debt becomes worthless; or

(2) A debt the loss from the worthlessness of which is incurred in the taxpayer's trade or business.

The question whether a debt is a nonbusiness debt is a question of fact in each particular case. The determination of whether the loss on a debt's becoming worthless has been incurred in a trade or business of the taxpayer shall, for this purpose, be made in substantially the same manner for determining whether a loss has been incurred in a trade or business for purposes of section 165(c)(1). For purposes of subparagraph (2) of this paragraph, the character of the debt is to be determined by the relation which the loss resulting from the debt's becoming worthless bears to the trade or business of the taxpayer. If that relation is a proximate one in the conduct of the

trade or business in which the taxpayer is engaged at the time the debt becomes worthless, the debt comes within the exception provided by that subparagraph. The use to which the borrowed funds are put by the debtor is of no consequence in making a determination under this paragraph. For purposes of section 166 and this section, a nonbusiness debt does not include a debt described in section 165(g)(2)(C). See § 1.165-5, relating to losses on worthless securities.

(c) *Guaranty of obligations.* For provisions treating a loss sustained by a guarantor of obligations as a loss resulting from the worthlessness of a debt, see §§ 1.166-8 and 1.166-9.

(d) *Examples.* The application of this section may be illustrated by the following examples involving a case where A, an individual who is engaged in the grocery business and who makes his return on the basis of the calendar year, extends credit to B in 1955 on an open account:

Example (1). In 1956 A sells the business but retains the claim against B. The claim becomes worthless in A's hands in 1957. A's loss is not controlled by the nonbusiness debt provisions, since the original consideration has been advanced by A in his trade or business.

Example (2). In 1956 A sells the business to C but sells the claim against B to the taxpayer, D. The claim becomes worthless in D's hands in 1957. During 1956 and 1957, D is not engaged in any trade or business. D's loss is controlled by the nonbusiness debt provisions even though the original consideration has been advanced by A in his trade or business, since the debt has not been created or acquired in connection with a trade or business of D and since in 1957 D is not engaged in a trade or business incident to the conduct of which a loss from the worthlessness of such claim is a proximate result.

Example (3). In 1956 A dies, leaving the business, including the accounts receivable, to his son, C, the taxpayer. The claim against B becomes worthless in C's hands in 1957. C's loss is not controlled by the nonbusiness debt provisions. While C does not advance any consideration for the claim, or create or acquire it in connection with his trade or business, the loss is sustained as a proximate incident to the conduct of the trade or business in which he is engaged at the time the debt becomes worthless.

Example (4). In 1956 A dies, leaving the business to his son, C, but leaving the claim against B to his son, D, the taxpayer. The claim against B becomes worthless in D's

hands in 1957. During 1956 and 1957, D is not engaged in any trade or business. D's loss is controlled by the nonbusiness debt provisions even though the original consideration has been advanced by A in his trade or business, since the debt has not been created or acquired in connection with a trade or business of D and since in 1957 D is not engaged in a trade or business incident to the conduct of which a loss from the worthlessness of such claim is a proximate result.

Example (5). In 1956 A dies; and, while his executor, C, is carrying on the business, the claim against B becomes worthless in 1957. The loss sustained by A's estate is not controlled by the nonbusiness debt provisions. While C does not advance any consideration for the claim on behalf of the estate, or create or acquire it in connection with a trade or business in which the estate is engaged, the loss is sustained as a proximate incident to the conduct of the trade or business in which the estate is engaged at the time the debt becomes worthless.

Example (6). In 1956, A, in liquidating the business, attempts to collect the claim against B but finds that it has become worthless. A's loss is not controlled by the nonbusiness debt provisions, since the original consideration has been advanced by A in his trade or business and since a loss incurred in liquidating a trade or business is a proximate incident to the conduct thereof.

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11402, Nov. 26, 1960, as amended by T.D. 7657, 44 FR 68464, Nov. 29, 1979; T.D. 7728, 45 FR 72650, Nov. 3, 1980]

§ 1.166-6 Sale of mortgaged or pledged property.

(a) *Deficiency deductible as bad debt—*

(1) *Principal amount.* If mortgaged or pledged property is lawfully sold (whether to the creditor or another purchaser) for less than the amount of the debt, and the portion of the indebtedness remaining unsatisfied after the sale is wholly or partially uncollectible, the mortgagee or pledgee may deduct such amount under section 166(a) (to the extent that it constitutes capital or represents an item the income from which has been returned by him) as a bad debt for the taxable year in which it becomes wholly worthless or is charged off as partially worthless. See § 1.166-3.

(2) *Accrued interest.* Accrued interest may be included as part of the deduction allowable under this paragraph, but only if it has previously been returned as income.

(b) *Realization of gain or loss—*(1) *Termination of amount.* If, in the case of

a sale described in paragraph (a) of this section, the creditor buys in the mortgaged or pledged property, loss or gain is also realized, measured by the difference between the amount of those obligations of the debtor which are applied to the purchase or bid price of the property (to the extent that such obligations constitute capital or represent an item the income from which has been returned by the creditor) and the fair market value of the property.

(2) *Fair market value defined.* The fair market value of the property for this purpose shall, in the absence of clear and convincing proof to the contrary, be presumed to be the amount for which it is bid in by the taxpayer.

(c) *Basis of property purchased.* If the creditor subsequently sells the property so acquired, the basis for determining gain or loss upon the subsequent sale is the fair market value of the property at the date of its acquisition by the creditor.

(d) *Special rules applicable to certain banking organizations.* For special rules relating to the treatment of mortgaged or pledged property by certain mutual savings banks, domestic building and loan associations, and cooperative banks, see section 595 and the regulations thereunder.

(e) *Special rules applicable to certain reacquisitions of real property.* Notwithstanding this section, special rules apply for taxable years beginning after September 2, 1964 (and for certain taxable years beginning after December 31, 1957), to the gain or loss on certain reacquisitions of real property, to indebtedness remaining unsatisfied as a result of such reacquisitions, and to the basis of the reacquired real property. See §§ 1.1038-1 through 1.1038-3.

[T.D. 6500, 25 FR 11402, Nov. 26, 1960, as amended by T.D. 6814, 30 FR 4472, Apr. 7, 1965, T.D. 6916, 32 FR 5923, Apr. 13, 1967]

§ 1.166-7 Worthless bonds issued by an individual.

(a) *Allowance of deduction.* A bond or other similar obligation issued by an individual, if it becomes worthless in whole or in part, is subject to the bad debt provisions of section 166. The loss from the worthlessness of any such bond or obligation is deductible in accordance with section 166(a), unless